

Wilderness

A *Views of the National Parks* knowledge center



Have you ever gone to a place that was beyond the end of the road?

Wilderness is an indispensable part of American history. Native Americans depended on the bounty of wildlands for survival and held Earth and its wild places as sacred. The great western explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were inspired by the untamed beauty of wild places that became the forge upon which our distinctive American character was created.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System, the system of all America's wilderness areas, to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." The United States was the first country in the world to define and designate wilderness areas through law. Wilderness is part of our history and heritage, passed as a legacy to future generations. Indispensable to the American past,

wilderness will remain essential to the American future.

What is wilderness and why is it important? Where are wilderness areas located and how are they managed? Who helped establish wilderness areas and what can you do to help take care of them? Come, join us on an adventure into the wildlands of America.

Features

The exploration of wilderness will take you on a journey over time and across the entire United States. Learn how the concept of wilderness became the National Wilderness Preservation System and how wilderness affects us today. Throughout the entire module, get the human perspective by listening to interviews with people who have made connections with wilderness.

• Introduction

Begin your exploration with a short, animated video that introduces the ideas of wilderness.

Wilderness areas found all across the United States are places where nature dominates and people are mere visitors. (Philip Burton Wilderness, California, NPS Photo)

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

— Haida saying

The notion of wilderness goes beyond untrammelled lands. It is also the story of Americans working to protect special places in our country. Learn about the wilderness concept, how wilderness is protected, and why wilderness is important.

What a country chooses to save is what a country chooses to say about itself.

— Mollie Beatty, Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **What is wilderness?**
Learn how wilderness is defined and how legislation was passed to protect it. Explore some of the values that are associated with wilderness and how they make wilderness a many -faceted treasure.
- **Where is wilderness?**
Find out where wilderness areas are located in our country and how the system has grown since its inception in 1964.
- **Why do we choose to protect wilderness?**
Investigate the origin of the wilderness concept, how this concept changed over time, and how we look at wilderness today.
- **How is wilderness managed?**
Learn about the government agencies with management responsibilities. Explore the threats facing wilderness and how managers deal with these threats. Try some interactive management scenarios to see how your decisions matched those of the real managers.
- **Who is connected to wilderness?**
Listen to a variety of people talk about how they interact with wilderness.
- **Wilderness up close**
Explore examples of wilderness areas across the United States. Using sounds, 360 degree images, and video, get up close to wilderness.
- **How you can help**
You can be a part of wilderness. Learn what you can do to protect wilderness.

local and distant) with curriculum-based activities and lesson plans for use in the classroom and in the field. Information is provided so teachers can relate this knowl - edge center to national teaching standards.

Partners

The NPS Natural Resource Program Center - Office of Education and Outreach teamed up with experts from the Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, James Madison University, and the University of Arizona to produce this module. Interviews, images, sound clips, music and expertise were donated by over 120 individuals from all over the country.

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Teacher Resources

The Teacher Guide provides teachers (both

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